

Response to Councillor Petitions 12 March 2024 Full Council

Cllr Marley Bennett – Restore a Bus Service to Stapleton (816 signatures)

Stapleton residents have been left cut off since the withdrawal of all bus services running through the neighbourhood.

A bus service, either a subsidised service or a for-profit bus service, needs to be run through Stapleton up Bell Hill, to provide a crucial connection for residents.

Why is this important?

Despite only being a short distance from Bristol City Centre, and there being a number of bus services that run alongside the parallel Fishponds Road, no buses currently run up Bell Hill leaving residents cut off.

This particularly negatively impacts people who do not drive, people with disabilities or ill-health, and visitors to Elm Tree Farm. We should also be encouraging people to travel sustainably - but this can only be done if people have a bus service that they can rely on.

Dear Councillor Bennett,

Thank you for raising this issue and bringing it to Full Council.

I agree with you that Bristol's bus services are not what we need them to be. They fall short of being the reliable transport option residents deserve, despite their importance for keeping local communities connected. Viable public transport is the backbone of sustainable travel.

Operation of bus services have been deregulated in the United Kingdom since the 1980s, giving local authorities limited powers to influence the way bus operators work.

Supported bus services in the region are managed by the West of England Combined Authority (WECA), who will be delivering improvements through the Bus Services Improvement Plan ([BSIP](#)). You may be interested in reading about the work being done to improve transport in Bristol here: [Bristol streets – Transport Corridor Improvements - Travelwest](#).

Despite limited powers, we've worked hard to implement bus prioritisation where we can. Our recently completed road improvement scheme on Bristol Bridge is supporting a fast, reliable and sustainable travel option for residents to access the city centre. We also have plans for major road improvement works on the A4 Portway, increasing the effectiveness of our busses.

East Bristol has long been ignored by strategic bus routes. To address this, we need transformative change. Bristol needs a segregated mass transit system, separate from other modes of transport to ensure its reliability and to connect people to jobs and opportunity. This must include underground sections where there is no reasonable other option, to prevent crippling road closures that would take our city's transport system back to square one.